

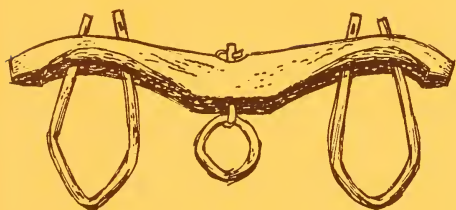
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Has the Lincoln Theme Been  
Exhausted?

# LINCOLN ROOM



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## HAS THE LINCOLN THEME BEEN EXHAUSTED?<sup>1</sup>

A foreign wit has been quoted as saying that America is the only nation that has passed from barbarism to decadence without ever passing through civilization.<sup>2</sup> Attempting no comment on this startling statement one may ask whether Lincoln authorship shall pass from its present imperfect state to decadence without undergoing further critical development by historically trained scholars. Lincoln might seem the most over-worked subject in American history.<sup>3</sup> But Lincoln is everybody's subject. The hand of the amateur has rested heavily upon Lincoln studies. And not only of the amateur historian, but of the collector, the manuscript dealer, the propagandist, the political enthusiast, the literary adventurer. Also the hand of the Union League has been operative, for in traditional Lincoln historiography, which becomes at times hagiography, the party influence, if not indeed the party label, has been all too evident.

The quality of much of the Lincoln output may be briefly suggested by a few examples. In a book of five hundred pages Lincoln is psycho-analyzed in terms of "mother-complex", "father-fear", "the Eden [also described as a "lost ecstasy"] from which the infant Lincoln had been so ruthlessly expelled when he was weaned", the Madonna ideal, and the "feeling of all-ness or . . . primary narcissism".<sup>4</sup> Beveridge, Barton, Herndon, Weik, and others have concluded that Lincoln's maternal grandfather is unknown;<sup>5</sup> but in order to supply a Grandfather Hanks and thus make the genealogical picture all neat and proper, a certain

<sup>1</sup> This paper was read in part at the joint session of the American Historical Association and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association at Washington, December 28, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Indirectly quoted without citation of source in the *Saturday Evening Post*, Oct. 20, 1934, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> There were in 1934 about 2480 printed cards in the Library of Congress for publications relating to Lincoln, over and above thousands of articles in magazines and newspapers (L. G. Caton, acting secretary, Library of Congress, to the author, Oct. 29, 1934). A bibliography of Lincoln running to ten thousand or more titles could probably be made. The best list, however, would be a selective one that would eliminate a vast number of trivial items. In the present article the author makes no effort to review Lincoln bibliography; but in the *Dictionary of American Biography* (XI, 258-259) he mentions the main titles up to 1933 with some effort toward brief criticism. For titles since 1933 the files of the *American Historical Review* and the bulletins of the Abraham Lincoln Association will serve as guides.

<sup>4</sup> L. Pierce Clark, *Lincoln: a Psycho-Biography* (New York, 1933), pp. 50, 425, 502, and *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858* (Boston, 1928), I, 15.

Lucy (?) Shipley has been discovered whose Christian name has also been given as Nancy and whose marital partner has sometimes been mentioned as James Hanks, sometimes as Joseph Hanks.<sup>6</sup> Another allegation is that Grandmother Lincoln was also a Shipley. Among the bits of "evidence" on the Shipley-Hanks connection is this statement by a Shipley descendant: "I used to hear my grandmother say that she was a cousin (2nd cousin, I think) to Nancy Hanks or the president, but think it was cousin to Nancy Hanks but don't remember just how the relationship was."<sup>7</sup> We have Lincoln this and Lincoln that: Lincoln the "Man of the People", the "Heart of Lincoln", the "Soul of Lincoln", "Honest Abe", the "Genesis of Lincoln", the "Influence of Chicago upon . . . Lincoln", "Lincoln as Uncle Sam", "Lincoln the Kentucky Mountaineer", "Lincoln and Liquor", and "The Women Lincoln Loved". In addition, we have the "Real Lincoln", the "True Lincoln", and rarefied disquisitions on the world significance of Lincoln.

In an anecdote of our own time it appears that a Pole, returning from a lion hunt, wrote a book entitled "The Polish Corridor and its Relation to Lion Hunting in Africa". It is not mere humor to say that such has been the motif of many a book, brochure, speech, or sermon on Lincoln. A dog lover gives us "Dogs were Ever a Joy to Lincoln"; a physician presents "Lincoln and the Doctors"; a Greek writes of "The Torch of Democracy kindled by Pericles borne to Triumph by America's Lincoln"; an author whose creed can be conjectured discusses the "Baptist Training of Lincoln"; a well-known firm in Philadelphia contributes "The Wanamaker Primer on Abraham Lincoln". It seems that this process—taking whatever happens to be a man's dominant interest and giving it a labored tangency to Lincoln—goes on forever. The yearly crop of Lincoln-day speeches, colored by the variegated predilections of the orators, is of staggering proportions. In urging expansion, denouncing the League of

<sup>6</sup> *Lincoln Lore* (published weekly by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Ind.), no. 214; Ida M. Tarbell, *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (2 vols., New York, 1899), I, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Lincoln Lore*, no. 214. The spurious nature of much that passes for Lincoln scholarship is strikingly seen in the stately birthplace memorial near Hodgenville, Kentucky. The inscriptions indelibly carved into the granite temple which houses the restored log cabin contain amazing errors. The dates of Thomas Lincoln's removal from Kentucky to Indiana and of his residence in Indiana are in error; the date ascribed for Nancy Hanks's birth is unreliable; there is a serious mistake as to her parents (given here as Joseph and Nancy [Shipley] Hanks); there are erroneous statements as to her being orphaned at nine and reared by foster parents; and the date of her marriage to Thomas Lincoln is incorrectly given. Such blunders in so prominent a national shrine offer the best example of the need for competent historical service in the marking of historic sites.



Nations, assailing the New Deal, favoring a big navy, arguing for a stronger central government, defending state rights, or electioneering for a favorite son, orators are ever ready to show what Lincoln "would have said" on this or that current question. Yet the careful scholar need not go far to discover gaps, doubts, prevalent misconceptions, unsupported interpretations, and erroneous assumptions.

A close examination reveals two facts of interest to the American Historical Association: First, that in the preparation of collateral material touching the Lincoln story and in the production of numerous useful monographs, professional historians have been active; second, that among comprehensive biographers who have made Lincoln their main interest the trained historical specialist is rarely seen. If, therefore, one asks whether the historical guild has made significant contributions within the broader Lincoln field, the answer is undoubtedly in the affirmative; but to the question whether the field has been so fully tilled that further returns will not justify the effort, a confident negative may be returned.

The general reader, vaguely aware of the multitude of Lincoln writings, or the historian who has specialized elsewhere, might suppose that the Lincoln theme has been sufficiently developed. If, however, one finds that in the sources there is both spade work and refining work to be done, that the main body of Lincoln manuscripts is closed to research, that no definitive edition of the works is to be had, that genuine Lincoln documents are continually coming to light while false ones receive unmerited credence, and that collateral studies bearing upon Lincoln are being steadily developed, then any conclusion as to the exhaustion of the theme would appear premature. If the investigator further discovers that there are obscure points to be searched, disputed points to be pondered, lacunae to be filled, revisionist interpretations to be applied or tested, excellent studies yet to be published, others in progress, valuable projects still to be undertaken, and finally, that an adequate, full-length biography (comparable, let us say, to Freeman's new life of Lee) is still in the future, then he realizes that, far from being exhausted, the field is rich in opportunity. It will be the burden of this paper to suggest the nature of this opportunity by reviewing some of the unfinished tasks and current problems of Lincoln scholarship as they appear to the historical specialist.

Foremost among the sources are the Lincoln papers in the Library of Congress with which is closely related the Nicolay-Hay edition of the "Complete Works". These papers, partly personal and partly official,

were for a long time in the possession of Robert Todd Lincoln. They have been physically in the Library of Congress as a deposit since 1919, where they occupy 126 boxes; but it was not until 1923 that Robert Lincoln surrendered ownership.<sup>8</sup> This he did by deed of gift providing that the papers were to be deposited in the Library of Congress for the benefit of all the people on the condition that they be placed in a sealed vault or compartment and carefully preserved from official or private inspection for twenty-one years after the donor's death. In a letter to Dr. Herbert Putnam, Librarian of Congress, dated January 16, 1926, Mr. Lincoln modified the condition of the deed of gift. He gave Mrs. Robert Lincoln access to the papers and vested in her the authority to permit them to be examined by others; but, so far as the writer's knowledge goes, such permission has never been given. He also introduced a further modification by permitting a full index to be made of the contents of the collection "to the end that their safety may be preserved against the time when they shall be opened to the public".<sup>9</sup> In the same year (July 26, 1926) Robert Todd Lincoln died.

Though the papers are sealed, certain facts concerning them are known. It is evident that the only biographers of Lincoln who have used them are Nicolay and Hay, by whom they were edited under the incorrect title *Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works*. It is also possible on the basis of available evidence to generalize concerning the main contents of the collection. Mr. J. C. Fitzpatrick, who as assistant chief of the Division of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress attended to the boxing of the papers, states that they contain about ten or twelve thousand pieces dating from 1834 to Lincoln's death, and that about one sixth or one seventh are Lincoln autographs. Over ninety-nine per cent of these autographs, he writes, have been printed by Nicolay and Hay, but he adds that the value of the collection lies in the great mass of letters to Lincoln. These not only clarify the Lincoln side of the correspondence, but are further useful as containing endorsements and jottings in Lincoln's hand. The little checking that he was able to do showed that the texts of Nicolay and Hay "were accurate and [that] they were not guilty of omissions". He further states, however, that they were "too close to the emotional boilings of the Civil War" and that they had the partisan attitude.<sup>10</sup>

As to the manner of Nicolay and Hay as editors a fair criticism can

<sup>8</sup> *Report of the Librarian of Congress*, 1923, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 1926, pp. 58-59.

<sup>10</sup> Letter of J. C. Fitzpatrick to the author, Mar. 12, 1935.

now be given without awaiting the unsealing of the Robert Lincoln collection, since many of the Lincoln originals are in open collections in the Library of Congress, such as those of McClellan, Welles, Stanton, and Johnson, while most of the Lincoln items owned by collectors, dealers, and libraries elsewhere are also open to historical investigation. Comparisons between the originals and the printed versions show that the secretarial biographers did not seek to reproduce the papers as they were, but rather to "edit" them in the broader sense in order to achieve a certain formal correctness of the printed edition. They adhered, in brief, to the older canons of historical editing. Where Lincoln wrote in pencil, where he crossed out a word and substituted another, where he committed an error of spelling or grammar, where he used abbreviated titles such as "Genl" or "Secy", or where his handwriting revealed emotional stress on certain words (as in a seeming capital letter or italicization), these peculiarities do not appear in the more proper but less distinctive printed version. Regularly Nicolay and Hay normalized Lincoln's grammar, which meant changing words in not a few cases; they gave the documents an editorial form in the matter of line arrangement and paragraphing which frequently differed from the original; and they always felt free to change punctuation not only in such a matter as correcting Lincoln's habit of writing a dash for a period (almost an earmark of handwritten Lincoln documents), but in constantly altering such details as colons, semicolons, and commas. Changes of punctuation to clarify the meaning sometimes led to alterations of sentence structure, while the unnecessary substitution of "coöperation" for "co-operation" has given the final copy a polish not characteristic of Lincoln. The Nicolay-Hay edition has other defects. It is almost completely lacking in annotation. It usually omits precisely those facts about the documents which the secretaries ought to have known best—*e.g.*, the distinction between letters which Lincoln wrote in his own hand, letters which he dictated to a clerk to be written in his own phrasing, and those which were phrased by a clerk or secretary and merely signed by the President. It fails to indicate the source or collection from which a particular document is taken. In the case of a dispatch transmitted from the President in cipher by military telegraph to the commander of the Army of the Potomac, for example, the printed version does not tell whether the document reproduced is taken from the President's papers, from the transmitting telegraph office in Washington, or from the receiving operator at the commander's headquarters. Yet such information would be useful in discovering a possible error of transmission, of

deciphering, or of copying. When all this has been said, however, it is but fair to add that, within their artificial standards of editing, Nicolay and Hay were reasonably careful and accurate.

It would be of interest to know what documents in the sealed collection are omitted from the Nicolay-Hay edition. Even if they constitute less than one per cent, the student may harbor a pardonable curiosity as to what the omissions are. It is known, however, that the edition lacks completeness by hundreds of items. Besides Nicolay and Hay one must use "Lincoln Letters at Brown", the appendix of Miss Tarbell's second volume, and further collections edited by Tracy, Angle, and Hertz.<sup>11</sup> But this whole shelf of volumes is incomplete in the matter of known Lincoln writings, as the collector realizes when he peruses the catalogues of manuscript dealers and makes newspaper clippings that tell of new Lincoln discoveries. Lincoln sources are continually turning up. Recently there was brought to light a copy of the Howells biography (1860) annotated in Lincoln's handwriting. It is here that we have Lincoln's own statement as to his first meeting with Douglas.<sup>12</sup> From forgotten newspaper files there has been recently salvaged an extended report of a campaign speech delivered by Lincoln at a huge Republican mass convention at Kalamazoo on August 27, 1856. The report, which is better than the average of newspaper accounts, shows this to have been one of Lincoln's major speeches, though it does not appear in any collection of his addresses or papers. His main theme was the preservation of a civilization in which "every man can make himself". Such a civilization he deemed to be threatened if slavery was allowed to spread.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Lincoln Letters, hitherto unpublished, in the Library of Brown University and other Providence Libraries* (Providence, 1927); Gilbert A. Tracy (compiler), *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln . . .* (Boston, 1917); *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln*, compiled by Paul M. Angle (Boston, 1930); Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: a New Portrait* (2 vols., New York, 1931).

<sup>12</sup> The campaign biography by W. D. Howells is contained in a volume published at New York in 1860 under the title *Lives and Speeches of Abraham Lincoln and Hannibal Hamlin* (406 pp.). This particular copy, read carefully and annotated by Lincoln himself, was owned by Samuel C. Parks of Lincoln, Illinois, and is now in the possession of Samuel C. Parks of Cody, Wyoming. A photostat reproduction of those portions of the book which bear Lincoln's annotations is to be found in the library of the Illinois State Historical Society. One example of Lincoln's corrections may be noted. Howells had written (p. 41) that Lincoln had supposedly made the acquaintance of Douglas while a clerk in Offut's store at New Salem. Lincoln's marginal comment was: "Wholly wrong—I first saw Douglas at Vandalia, Decr. 1834—I never saw him at New Salem—". See Benjamin P. Thomas, "A Unique Biography of Lincoln", *Bulletin*, no. 35, Abraham Lincoln Association, June, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> *Detroit Daily Advertiser*, Aug. 29, 1856. This elaborate report of the Kalamazoo speech, though used by no biographer as yet, is of special interest. Lincoln, newly at-



Thus the search for newspaper accounts at times yields interesting results,<sup>14</sup> while at other times it has at least a negative significance. The meagerness of newspaper material on Lincoln's campaign speech for Taylor delivered at Boston on September 22, 1848, emphasizes the obscurity of the Illinois congressman at this time. The Boston *Atlas*,<sup>15</sup> for example, printed a report of Seward's speech on the same occasion in a long column and a third with the barest reference to a speech by "Hon. Abram Lincoln, of Illinois", while the Boston *Daily Advertiser* went so far as to devote seventy words to show how Lincoln "clearly and eloquently stated . . . the Whig doctrine . . .". In conclusion the reporter referred to "the speaker of the evening" (Seward) in such a way as practically to ignore Lincoln.<sup>16</sup>

Among the most prized of historical sources are diaries; yet in the case of Lincoln such material has presented peculiar difficulties. The second volume of the Browning diary was not published until 1933.<sup>17</sup> The diary of Edward Bates also was not printed until 1933, and then not in full.<sup>18</sup> The important diaries and letters of John Hay were "printed but not published" in 1908 in a limited and incomplete edition

tached to the Republican party, stressed the preponderant influence of the South in Congress, deplored the prospect that slavery was to be made "a ruling element in our government", defended Frémont and his party against the abolitionist charge, and put the rhetorical question "Have we no interest in the free Territories . . . that they should be kept open for the homes of free white people?" The speech, apparently extemporaneous, was reported to the extent of about three thousand words by one of the "four phonographers" whom the *Daily Advertiser* mentions as having been used. Lincoln himself had no recollection that any of his speeches in the campaign of 1856, of which he delivered over fifty, had been "put in print" (John G. Nicolay and John Hay, eds., *Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works* [two-vol. ed., New York, 1894], I, 644). A further matter of interest in connection with this speech is the comment of an opposition paper that the speaker "was far too conservative and Union loving . . . to suit his audience . . ." (*Michigan Historical Magazine*, V, 287-288). For a photostat copy of this issue of the *Daily Advertiser* the writer is indebted to the kindness of Mr. Thomas Irwin Starr of Dearborn, Michigan.

<sup>14</sup> For a newly discovered speech of Lincoln, delivered at Bloomington, Ill., see the article contributed by Ernest E. East, *Journal*, Illinois State Historical Society, XXVIII (Apr. 1935), 65-77.

<sup>15</sup> Reprinted in the Salem (Mass.) *Gazette*, Sept. 23, 1848.

<sup>16</sup> Boston *Daily Advertiser*, Sept. 23, 1848.

<sup>17</sup> Theodore Calvin Pease and James G. Randall, eds., *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* in Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library, vols. XX and XXII. The first of these volumes appeared in 1927. They constitute an important Lincoln source, both for the Illinois period and the presidency.

<sup>18</sup> Howard K. Beale, ed., *The Diary of Edward Bates, 1859-1866*, American Historical Association, *Annual Report*, 1930, vol. IV. The volume is dated 1933 on the title page. An earlier portion of the Bates diary (1846-1852), in the possession of the Missouri Historical Society, could not be obtained for inclusion in the Beale edition.

which omitted surnames. This source, because of various restrictions, is so difficult of access in the original that scholars anticipate with keen interest the new edition of the Hay papers now being prepared by Tyler Dennett.

Another famous diary of the period presents one of the unsolved puzzles of American history. The reference, of course, is to the "Diary of a Public Man", published anonymously in the *North American Review* in 1879.<sup>19</sup> In style and subject matter, as well as in the persistent mystery that surrounds it and the reliance of historians on its contents despite the mystery,<sup>20</sup> the diary is of unique interest. It is presented as the record of a conservative Northerner and it covers the eventful months from December of 1860 to March of 1861. Beginning with an account of Orr's mission from South Carolina to Washington, the journal proceeds with shrewd and stately comment through the secession crisis, recording confidential remarks of Buchanan, Seward, Douglas, and Lincoln, revealing the tone of Washington gossip, noting a conference with Lincoln in New York (February 20, 1861) on a matter which is not disclosed,<sup>21</sup> and through it all reproducing the tense atmosphere just preceding the Civil War with a vividness that makes it seem as yesterday. The comments on Lincoln are most interesting. The diarist refers to the new leader as not yet "out of Springfield",<sup>22</sup> gives a striking picture of an agitated and uncomfortable incoming President at inauguration, mentions Douglas's gesture in holding Lincoln's hat on this occasion, registers disappointment in the inaugural address,<sup>23</sup> alludes to Lincoln's social awkwardness in wearing black kid gloves at the opera in New York,<sup>24</sup> shows the new occupant of the White House under overwhelming pressure from office seekers, and (which is invaluable to biographers, if genuine) records pithy bits of Lincoln's casual conversation, such as his inquiry whether one of his callers had a "postmaster in . . . [his] pocket".<sup>25</sup>

It is obvious that, if authentic, the diary is capital grist for the Lincoln mill, also that historians of standing have treated it as authentic. As a

<sup>19</sup> "The Diary of a Public Man: Unpublished Passages of the Secret History of the American Civil War", *North American Review*, CXXIX, 125-140, 259-273, 375-388, 484-496.

<sup>20</sup> For Rhodes's use of the diary, see his *History of the United States*, III, 223, 226, 230, 304, 318, 320, 327, 340.

<sup>21</sup> *North Am. Rev.*, CXXIX, 137-140.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

<sup>23</sup> For the description of the inauguration, see *ibid.*, pp. 382 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 488.

problem in historical method, however, the main point to be noted at this stage of the investigation is that neither the authorship of the famous journal nor its authenticity, which is inseparable from authorship, is proved beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt. The problem is very baffling when one gets into details. If the historian notes that the diarist claims to have conferred with Douglas or Seward, with Lincoln or Lord Lyons, he can get no "cross check" from the other side of these beautifully recorded interviews. Elaborate search has been made. Newspaper files have been studied, hotel registers sought, Washington addresses of statesmen checked with chance remarks as to the diarist's comings and goings, memoirs of the time ransacked, all without producing conclusive evidence. No manuscript of the diary has been found, and no records of the *North American Review* have been located which throw light on the problem of authorship.<sup>26</sup> Internal evidence reveals less about the diarist than could be wished, as is shown when one takes the superficial conclusion that he was a senator only to find that this leads down a blind alley.<sup>27</sup> That he was, if the diary is genuine,<sup>28</sup> a Northerner, probably (at least by origin) a New Englander, not a New Yorker nor a Marylander,<sup>29</sup> a man of distinction, a statesman personally agreeable

<sup>26</sup> Letter from Willis Fletcher Johnson, editor of the *North American Review*, to the author, Apr. 27, 1927.

<sup>27</sup> In summarizing conjectures from internal evidence concerning the diarist's identity, Allen Johnson refers to him as a leading personage of long residence in Washington, a Northern Unionist in sympathetic touch with Southern leaders, a conservative, a lover of peace, a close friend of Seward and Douglas, a former Whig, presumably a Republican, probably a senator, and an active leader concerned with patent rights, trade relations, manufactures, and the tariff (*The Historian and Historical Evidence* [New York, 1926], pp. 59-60). As to the Public Man being a senator the relevant passages refer to occasions when he listened to speeches in the Senate (which he might have done as a visitor), and to his sitting "in the Senate-chamber" on March 4, 1861, as did various dignitaries on the day of Lincoln's inauguration (*North Am. Rev.*, CXXIX, 259, 271, 382, 492). By comparison of known facts with statements in the diary many senators may be eliminated because of being Southerners, having a previous acquaintance with Lincoln which the diarist lacked, being mentioned in the diary, being absent from Washington when the diarist claims to have been there or present in the Senate when the diarist was in New York (Feb. 20, 1861), or coming from a state concerning which the diarist writes as an outsider. After an elaborate elimination and checking the author has been unable to ascribe the diary to any individual among the few that survive the sifting. There is excellent reason to doubt that the elusive and mysterious Public Man was a senator.

<sup>28</sup> E. L. Pierce considered the diary spurious. *Addresses and Papers by Edward L. Pierce*, A. W. Stevens, ed. (Boston, 1896), pp. 393-397.

<sup>29</sup> That the diarist was a New Englander (again one must add "if genuine") is suggested in *North Am. Rev.*, CXXIX, 376. He refers to New Yorkers, to a Marylander, and to "Western men" in such terms as to imply that he did not belong to any of these groups. *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 269, 385.

to Southerners, a moderate, and not a Lincoln enthusiast, seems evident; but his identity is still unsettled.<sup>30</sup>

The important diary of Gideon Welles has also occasioned historical questioning; but the subject is not to be dismissed by any offhand assertion that it is unreliable. The Welles document is, indeed, to be approached with caution, but not with an indiscriminating rejection of the whole record. The nub of the matter is simply that the historian should avoid taking the printed diary as the original contemporary journal, since it omits various juicy morsels and does not reveal the numerous emendations that Welles made in later years. Collation of the printed diary with the manuscript shows, for example, that under date of May 21, 1868, certain comments on Union leaders are deleted, one of them being a reference to the "whisky loving" Chandler and the other an allusion to Grant's being forced to leave the army for drunkenness. By reference to H. K. Beale's study and by consultation of the original in the Library of Congress, the specialist can distinguish between what was contemporary with the event and what was added or subtracted, whether by Welles or by the editor, in the printed version.<sup>31</sup> For more general use a truly scholarly edition of the full diary would meet the case.

It was only yesterday (1930) that there appeared the first critical edition of Herndon, by Paul M. Angle,<sup>32</sup> who also brought out in the same year *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln*, running to 387 pages. Even the *Congressional Record* has proved valuable, for in 1921 it yielded new letters of Lincoln to Yates.<sup>33</sup> Bits from Lincoln's hand are to be found among the Attorney General's papers and other Civil War archives not yet fully searched. The new National Archives ought to stimulate this type of work.<sup>34</sup> To illustrate the possibility of new Chase material

<sup>30</sup> The best treatment of the subject is the unpublished paper delivered by Frank Maloy Anderson before the American Historical Association, Dec. 31, 1928. At this time Dr. Anderson ably discussed, among other phases, the question whether Amos Kendall might have been the diarist. See also Anderson's biography of Kendall in *Dict. Am. Biog.*, X, 327.

<sup>31</sup> Beale's criticism of the diary, showing that there were "probably thousands" of emendations prior to publication, appears in the *Am. Hist. Rev.*, XXX, 547-552.

<sup>32</sup> *Herndon's Life of Lincoln* (New York, 1930). Recent though it is, this important work is now unfortunately out of print.

<sup>33</sup> These Lincoln-Yates letters were published in "Abraham Lincoln", a speech of Hon. Richard Yates in the House of Representatives, *Cong. Rec.*, 66 Cong., 3 sess., pp. 3074-3079 (Feb. 12, 1921).

<sup>34</sup> A mere bookkeeping record may be made to tell its story, as in the case of the account book kept by the printer Gideon which contains itemized lists of printed speeches supplied in quantity to members of Congress for distribution among constituents. This record shows for the Thirtieth Congress that Lincoln ordered 7080 copies of his own



bearing upon the Lincoln story, the Library of Congress recently acquired an interesting document reporting a meeting in Washington as early as December 9, 1863, called to create for each state an organization to make Salmon P. Chase President of the United States. It is significant to note the men suggested as possible leaders of this boom—such men as Henry Wilson, Whitelaw Reid, Roscoe Conkling (with a question mark), John Austin Stevens, jr., Jay Cooke, O. P. Morton, Andrew Johnson, Hannibal Hamlin, John A. Andrew, and John Wentworth.<sup>35</sup> Another item on the Chase theme may be mentioned as an example of rare material which, while not unpublished, is virtually buried and is undeveloped by biographers. The Pomeroy Circular is well known, but there is another anti-Lincoln document written by S. C. Pomeroy that will be new to most readers. Published early in 1864, it denounced Lincoln in vigorous terms, deplored a second presidential term, and hinted that a leader with a huge army at his call might perpetuate himself by military power as well as by patronage. Decrying the “cant about ‘Honest Abe’”, the author pointed out that Lincoln would “be . . . unquestionably defeated” unless he used military power to control the election.<sup>36</sup>

It would be a long story to describe the resources of particular libraries, but a few examples may be indicated. The important collection of the Lincoln National Life Foundation at Fort Wayne, Indiana (Dr. Louis A. Warren, director), contains thousands of books and booklets, with varying editions of the same work in many cases. It is rich in newspaper and magazine material and also in manuscripts, which include the Hugh McCulloch papers and a number of Lincoln autographs. The Lincoln shelves in the library of the Illinois State Historical Society at Springfield are highly useful, and those of the Chicago Historical

speeches, for which he paid \$70.80. His total charge in the Gideon account for the first session of this Congress (ending in 1848) was \$132.30, while for the second session, after the campaign was over and the need for public enlightenment diminished, his charge was four dollars. George Saile Gideon Account Book, pp. 154–155, Library of Congress, MSS. Division. For a photostat copy the author is indebted to Mr. T. P. Martin of the Library of Congress.

<sup>35</sup> This document bears the endorsement: “Organization to make S P Chase President, December 9, 1863, Important.” The names were set down tentatively. The inclusion of a particular name in the list indicated not a declared willingness to lead in the Chase boom, but rather a reputation that would cause a group of political leaders to consider such leadership possible.

<sup>36</sup> This pamphlet bears call number E 458.4.P77 in the Library of Congress catalogue. It is entitled: “The Next Presidential Election: Mr. Lincoln—The Presidency . . . —The Candidate Wanted”, and is to be reprinted, under the editorship of Charles R. Wilson, in the “Documents” section of the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*.

Society contain many unique items. The McCormick Library at Chicago has manuscripts that bear upon Lincoln's connection with the McCormick Harvester case, as well as unpublished material concerning the secession movement in Virginia and the attitude of Virginians toward Lincoln at the time of this crisis. The libraries at the University of Illinois contain unprinted letters of Orville H. Browning, Ward H. Lamon, and other leaders, numerous photostats, and a voluminous collection of newspaper excerpts assembled by Arthur C. Cole. The Library of Congress, despite the sealing of the Lincoln papers, has rich resources on the Lincoln theme in its vast collections of manuscripts, newspapers, rare books, pamphlets, pictures, and broadsides. At the other side of the continent the Huntington Library contains documents gathered for the Lamon life of Lincoln (written by Chauncey F. Black). Included in this Lamon collection are various Lincoln autographs, copies of a portion of the Herndon manuscripts, and a considerable mass of papers to and from Lamon. In all, this library has about 230 letters of Lincoln.<sup>37</sup> While these have been made available in printed form by Angle, this was done only recently, and the fact remains that the material has been little used by careful and critical biographers. The Brown University library has in the McLellan-Lincoln collection a valuable body of Lincolniana.<sup>38</sup> At the University of Chicago there are, among other riches, the extensive Douglas manuscripts and the library and papers of William E. Barton. The Herndon-Weik manuscripts, however, whose value was so well shown by Beveridge, still remain in private hands.

In Welles letters, in Herndon letters, in the papers of David Davis, Ward Lamon, James W. Singleton, Leonard Swett, J. J. Hardin, Charles H. Lanphier, John A. McClernand, John M. Palmer, and Lyman Trumbull, and in many other collections, researchers may find grist for Lincoln studies. It is not merely in Lincoln collections that material is to be sought. The papers of Governor Francis H. Pierpont at Richmond contain evidence of Lincoln's little-known objections to the bill for the creation of West Virginia.<sup>39</sup>

Nor is it merely a matter of finding sources; when found, they call for critical work. On many a Lincoln source we need the kind of

<sup>37</sup> Memorandum to the author by W. O. Waters of the Huntington Library, Nov. 14, 1930; letter to the author by H. C. Schulz, Huntington Library, Nov. 2, 1934.

<sup>38</sup> Esther Cowles Cushman, *The McLellan Lincoln Collection at Brown University* (Providence, University Library, 1928).

<sup>39</sup> "We have great fears that the President will veto the new State bill." Waitman T. Willey to Francis H. Pierpont, Washington, D. C., Dec. 17, 1862, Pierpont MSS., State Archives, Richmond, Va.

scholarly investigation that is seen in Beale's study of the Welles diary.<sup>40</sup> No one can say how many more Lincoln hoaxes will be perpetrated, such as the *Atlantic Monthly* hoax,<sup>41</sup> the Melloni hoax,<sup>42</sup> and various fabrications which now and then turn up on old ledger sheets to trick collectors.<sup>43</sup> The alleged letter of Lincoln to Alexander H. Stephens dated January 19, 1860, supposedly "authenticated" by a letter of Stephens to Henry Whitney Cleveland (January 19, 1883), has been proved spurious by the researches of Worthington C. Ford.<sup>44</sup>

Some of the "new light" on Lincoln can only be described as the "light that failed". When Miss Tarbell was writing her biography it was "discovered" that H. C. Whitney had kept notes of that famous "lost speech" of Lincoln at Bloomington (May, 1856); and *McClure's Magazine* of September, 1896, presented a remarkable reproduction of this speech, concerning which Herndon had said that on that day his partner was "seven feet tall". Alas, however, as Paul M. Angle has pointed out, there is reason to doubt Whitney;<sup>45</sup> and the authenticity of the restored speech is now in question. A full treatment as to sources would show that further editing of Lincoln's speeches is needed; that Lincoln's own reading of newspaper proof is sometimes the ultimate source; that Lincoln's interim speeches during the debate with Douglas call for exploration; and that uncertainty exists as to the preparation and delivery of the Gettysburg address, despite "five copies . . . in Lincoln's own hand, and another copy printed . . . from manuscript furnished by

<sup>40</sup> See above, n. 31.

<sup>41</sup> *Bulletin*, Lincoln Centennial Association [later known as the Abraham Lincoln Association], Special Number, Dec. 1, 1928; *ibid.*, Second Special Number, Jan. 1, 1929.

<sup>42</sup> In this spurious letter, alleged to have been written in 1853 to the Italian scientist, Macedonio Melloni, the words falsely attributed to Lincoln include a reference to "that Rome which . . . will be . . . the luminous capital of the United States of Europe". The article giving the text of the letter, which appeared in an earlier edition of the *New York Times* of Nov. 22, 1931 (sec. 1, p. 29), was not carried over to the late city edition of the same day which is customarily used for bound files; but for shorter references to the same subject, see the late city edition, Nov. 23, 1931, p. 9, and May 8, 1932, sec. 1, p. 21. On Nov. 20, 1931, p. 8, the *Chicago Tribune* printed an article giving extracts from this letter under the headlines: "Lincoln in 1853 visioned Rome as Europe's Capital: Emancipator's Letter has come to Light".

<sup>43</sup> *Bulletin*, Abraham Lincoln Association, no. 34 (Mar., 1934), p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Proceedings*, Massachusetts Historical Society, May-June, 1928, pp. 183-195. The "certificate of genuineness" over the signature of Stephens was also proved a forgery.

<sup>45</sup> Angle writes: "It is difficult to draw any other conclusion than that the Whitney version . . . is so largely a product of the imagination that it is entirely unreliable, in substance as well as phraseology." See Tarbell, *Lincoln*, I, 295-299; "Lincoln's 'Lost Speech'", *Bulletin*, Abraham Lincoln Assoc., no. 21 (Dec., 1930).

him".<sup>46</sup> One also finds that the whole record of Lincoln's law cases before the Illinois Supreme Court is not to be had in the printed *Reports*;<sup>47</sup> that the determination of Lincoln originals is in some cases purely a matter of handwriting; and that important sources still remain difficult of access.<sup>48</sup>

In spite of all the work done on Lincoln, doubts remain. The familiar Ann Rutledge story, so elaborately woven into American folklore, must be set down as mainly legend.<sup>49</sup> The "fatal first of January" (1841), a time of severe emotional disturbance in the troubled courtship of Lincoln and Mary Todd, is no longer accepted in the Herndonian sense, but that is not to say that it is fully understood. On this point important new material, considerably supplementing the work of Beveridge, has been supplied by Sandburg and Angle in their work on Mrs. Lincoln.<sup>50</sup> The claim of William O. Stoddard that he was the first

<sup>46</sup> William E. Barton, *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (Indianapolis, 1930), Foreword. Though the writings of Barton are perhaps overvoluminous, Lincoln scholars are indebted to him for painstaking studies in the sources.

<sup>47</sup> Paul M. Angle, *Lincoln, 1854-1861: being the Day-by-Day Activities of Abraham Lincoln from January 1, 1854 to March 4, 1861* (Springfield, 1933), pp. v-vi.

<sup>48</sup> Among the important sources which should be edited and made easier of access are the letters to the New York *Herald* written from Springfield by Henry Villard during the interval between Lincoln's election and his inauguration, and those which appeared in the New York *Sun* of June 30, 1889, revealing a surprising effort to force Lincoln's withdrawal as candidate in the summer of 1864.

<sup>49</sup> Angle has pointed out that the romantic love of Lincoln for Ann was first heard of thirty-one years after Ann's death, when Herndon in 1866 made it the subject of a sentimental lecture. Angle also shows that no reliable record contemporary with Ann's life has ever been discovered; that the testimony on the subject used by Herndon in his lecture and his biography of Lincoln was obtained in 1865 and later; and that at some points the legend runs counter to known facts, such as Lincoln's proposal of marriage to another woman within a year after Ann's death. Paul M. Angle, "Lincoln's First Love?", *Bulletin*, Lincoln Centennial Assoc., no. 9 (Dec. 1, 1927). Elsewhere Angle writes: "Of reliable evidence touching upon the romance itself, there is not the slightest particle. No contemporary record containing even a hint has ever been discovered. . . . McNamar and all of Herndon's other informants were recalling an episode which had terminated thirty-one years before. . . . It would be strange indeed if some measure of exaggeration did not creep into a story so perfectly suited for romancing. . . . Some of those to whom Herndon wrote replied that . . . the affair amounted to nothing. . . ." *Herndon's Life of Lincoln* (Angle ed.), p. xli. On the site of New Salem there was said to have been found in 1900 a "round flat stone on which is carved, 'A. Lincoln and Ann Rutledge were betrothed here July 4, 1833'" (*Bulletin*, no. 12, Lincoln Centennial Assoc., Sept. 1, 1928, pp. 6-8); but any writer who should base a conclusion upon such an unauthenticated item would be on exceedingly shaky ground.

<sup>50</sup> Herndon states that on Jan. 1, 1841, all preparations for the wedding ceremony had been made even to the assembling of the guests, but that Lincoln purposely failed to appear (*Herndon's Life of Lincoln* [Angle ed.], pp. 169-170). In Sandburg and Angle



journalist to propose Lincoln for President cannot be sustained.<sup>51</sup> The extent to which Lincoln went over to the Radicals has been exaggerated. If Lincoln was taken into the Radical camp bag and baggage, why, for example, was B. F. Wade such a relentless opponent of Lincoln, why did leading Radicals join in a secret movement to oust him as candidate in 1864,<sup>52</sup> and why did some of them see the hand of Providence in the tragedy of his removal?

Recent and current Lincoln studies show that new corners of the subject are being productively explored. Some of these studies have come by way of discussions before the Mississippi Valley Historical Association as in the Hamilton-Cole debate at Chattanooga in 1930,<sup>53</sup> or before the American Historical Association as in the Angle-Cole-Dumond-Sydnor session at Urbana in 1933. Geographically the contributions range widely. Without listing the localities or even the states from which they come, which would involve repetition of what is said elsewhere in this article, it is sufficient to note that each of the sections (North, East, Middle West, West,<sup>54</sup> and South) makes its offering. Many of the studies are naturally centered in Lincoln's own state. It is important in this connection to note the activities of the Abraham Lincoln Association, which began primarily as an association of citizens (chiefly in Springfield) to celebrate the Lincoln centennial in 1909 and which in recent years has broadened its outlook and turned its interests

(Carl Sandburg and Paul M. Angle, *Mary Lincoln: Wife and Widow* [New York, 1932], pp. 43-44) the same "fatal first" is treated as the day when Lincoln sought to beg off from the engagement but was so moved by Mary's tears that the engagement was on again, after which Mary, seeing his condition, regretfully but without bitterness released him. It is a tangled and difficult story in which it appears that Sandburg and Angle, especially in the documents printed in Part II, come nearer the truth than any other writers.

<sup>51</sup> Stoddard's claim appears in the *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXV, 171-177; see also his *Lincoln at Work* (Boston, 1900), pp. 11-19, 31-41. Biographers have followed Stoddard's lead, e.g., Tarbell, *Lincoln*, I, 337; Henry C. Whitney, *Lincoln the Citizen* [vol. I of the *Life of Lincoln*] (New York, 1908), pp. 262-265. The claim is that Stoddard in the *Central Illinois Gazette* of May 4, 1859, published at West Urbana (Champaign), Ill., brought out the first newspaper article proposing Lincoln for the presidency. The *Gazette* of that day, however, contains no such article; and though the alleged opening-gun article did appear in the *Gazette* on Dec. 7, 1859, many suggestions of Lincoln for the presidency appeared not only prior to that time, but also prior to May 4, 1859. For extracts from articles containing such suggestions, see Edwin Erle Sparks, *Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858* (Illinois Historical Collections, vol. III, Springfield, 1908), pp. 581 ff.

<sup>52</sup> See above, n. 48.

<sup>53</sup> *Am. Hist. Rev.*, XXXVI, 740-767; XXXVII, 700-711.

<sup>54</sup> A contribution from Wyoming appears in Laura A. White's essay on "Charles Sumner and the Crisis of 1860-61", in the projected volume entitled "Essays in Honor of William E. Dodd" (to be edited by Avery Craven), announced by the University of Chicago Press. Its importance for the Lincoln story needs no comment.

to the more serious aspects of Lincoln investigation, as shown by the stamp of scholarship which its bulletins and papers bear.<sup>55</sup> The *Transactions* and *Journal* of the Illinois State Historical Society (both edited at Springfield) are fruitful of Lincoln material;<sup>56</sup> and the *Collections* of the Illinois State Historical Library, whose editorial work is centered at the University of Illinois, has its Lincoln series. Nor should student dissertations be ignored, for in not a few cases their authors have carried them forward in extra-mural effort, in learned society discussion, and in publication.<sup>57</sup>

Some of the work still to be done may be briefly suggested. A type of research that will prove interesting is an examination of the letters and papers of Lincoln's biographers. One may mention in this connection a series of questions by Isaac N. Arnold to which W. H. Herndon replied with breezy comments on a variety of subjects including Lincoln's recreation, his lack of any ability to sing (the very question gave Herndon huge amusement), his social habits, the nature of his evening parties,

<sup>55</sup> Among the projects planned are the continuation of Angle's day-by-day record, a volume on Vandalia by Benjamin P. Thomas comparable to his delightful book on New Salem (*Lincoln's New Salem* [Springfield, 1934]), a book on Lincoln in Springfield by Angle, and a new study of Lincoln the lawyer by Angle and Thomas.

<sup>56</sup> For a local study in which civic pride joins happily with Lincoln interest, see "Chicago and Abraham Lincoln", by Blaine Brooks Gernon, *Journal*, Ill. St. Hist. Soc., XXVII (Oct., 1934), 243-284.

<sup>57</sup> Directly ancillary to the Lincoln story is the monograph by H. E. Pratt of Illinois Wesleyan entitled "David Davis, 1815-1886", doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, 1930. Only an abstract of this monograph has been printed (*Transactions*, Ill. St. Hist. Soc., 1930, pp. 157-183). Other significant studies by Dr. Pratt are: "Albert Taylor Bledsoe, Critic of Lincoln" (*ibid.*, 1934, pp. 153-183); "Life of John Dean Catton" (MS.); "The Repudiation of Lincoln's War Policy in 1862 . . . [in Illinois]", *Journal*, Ill. St. Hist. Soc., XXIV (Apr., 1931), pp. 129-140. W. E. Baringer of Urbana, Illinois, having published a valuable monograph on "Campaign Technique in Illinois—1860" (*Transactions*, Ill. St. Hist. Soc., 1932, pp. 203-281), is soon to complete a scholarly book on Lincoln's nomination. Economic aspects of Lincoln's election in 1860 are treated in a Johns Hopkins dissertation by Ollinger Crenshaw of Washington and Lee University. Mrs. Mack Taylor of Danville, Illinois, has made a contribution both to the Lincoln theme and to American social history in a book (not yet published) on "Culture in Illinois in Lincoln's Day". J. T. Dorris of Richmond, Kentucky, has in manuscript a solid study of pardon and amnesty under Lincoln and Johnson, the outgrowth of a University of Illinois thesis. Other recent Illinois theses of unusual interest are those of W. A. Harbison of Wayne University on "The Opposition to Lincoln within the Republican Party" and of Granville D. Davis of the University of Arkansas on factional differences within the Democratic party in Illinois, 1854-1858. P. G. Auchampaugh of Duluth, elaborating a subject of research at Syracuse and Clark universities, has produced studies of Buchanan which serve as a check upon both Douglas and Lincoln biographers. This list of studies launched as graduate research topics and developed by later scholarly effort could, if space permitted, be made much longer.

his playing at "fives" (handball), his carriage ("a common democratic thing"), his chasteness of thought and fineness of feeling which existed despite a fondness for robust anecdotes, his favorite authors, and the like.<sup>58</sup> Another letter of similar usefulness is that from O. H. Browning to Arnold concerning Lincoln's attitude toward religion.<sup>59</sup> Nor should the Lincoln student fail to note what passed between John Hay and John G. Nicolay when they were at work on their monumental biography. It is of no little interest to note Hay's statement to Nicolay that "we ought to write . . . like two everlasting angels—who know everything . . . tell the truth about everything and don't care a twang of their harps about one side or the other", and then to read Hay's comment as to McClellan in the same letter: "It is of the utmost moment that we should *seem* fair to him, while we are destroying him."<sup>60</sup> It is not without reason that Tyler Dennett dubs Hay the "Republican Laureate".<sup>61</sup>

Other opportunities for research may be indicated by questions which anyone can ask, but which no one short of a doctoral candidate can answer. Who will produce a truly adequate study of Lincoln as President-elect? What was Lincoln's relation to Seward's negotiations touching the Sumter question? Do we yet have the full story of Lincoln's connection with the "neutrality" policy of Kentucky in 1861? What can be learned of Lincoln's use of the "grape-vine telegraph"? Lincoln was thought to be wasting time in casual chit-chat with privates when in fact he was obtaining at the source an understanding of the common soldier's point of view. What part behind the scenes did Lincoln have in the doings of the Baltimore convention of 1864?<sup>62</sup> What did he have to do with the nomination of Andrew Johnson? Did Lincoln make statements in conflict with his published declaration that abolition was an essential condition of peace? In the Greeley episode he made abolition a peace essential; but he was said to have given contrary assurances to James W. Singleton and O. H. Browning.<sup>63</sup> How far was the nascent

<sup>58</sup> Herndon to Arnold, Springfield, Ill., Oct. 24, 1883 (MSS., Chicago Historical Society).

<sup>59</sup> Browning to Arnold, Quincy, Ill., Nov. 25, 1872 (*ibid.*).

<sup>60</sup> Hay's italics. The quoted portions are taken from a penciled letter of Aug. 10, 1885. Hay requested in a postscript that the letter be destroyed, as it "would be too great a temptation to any reporter who should pick it up". Tyler Dennett, *John Hay: from Poetry to Politics* (New York, 1933), pp. 139-140.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. XII.

<sup>62</sup> Address by Tyler Dennett before the Abraham Lincoln Association at Springfield, Feb. 12, 1935; to be published in its *Papers*.

<sup>63</sup> Browning, *Diary*, I, 694-695, 699; Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: a History* (New York, 1890), IX, 192; X, 115.



Republican economic regime in keeping with Lincoln's concepts, and how far in general can the Republican party be regarded as Lincoln's chart and compass? Does not Lincoln's ideology seem as close to the New Deal as to post-Civil War Republicanism? Was not Lincoln the central figure in a social-economic movement that was anti-Lincolnian? Who were Lincoln men? What men supported him wholeheartedly, what men reluctantly, what men with fingers crossed? What is to be said as to the apotheosis of Lincoln by a party which rejected Lincoln's principles? What, in detail, were the feelings and motives of those Lincoln supporters who deserted the Republican party after the war—men such as Browning, David Davis, and Trumbull? What more can be learned of Lincoln and foreign affairs? Should not more emphasis be placed upon such a slightly known matter as Lincoln's suggestion of arbitration in the controversy over the *Trent* affair?<sup>64</sup>

The subject of Lincoln's relations with Congress involves a whole bundle of questions. How does one account for the striking contrast between Lincoln and Wilson in the matter of presidential leadership and initiative in legislation? Why were so few measures passed under Lincoln which could be termed administration bills, though such was normally true of important bills under Wilson? Why was Lincoln so bold in assuming power independently of Congress and yet so ineffective in exerting influence on Capitol Hill? Why was he so hesitant to use the veto? Why did he sign bills of which he disapproved, as in the case of the second confiscation act, the West Virginia bill, and the measure (signed February 8, 1865) which, contrary to his known wish, excluded certain Southern states from the electoral college?<sup>65</sup> Would

<sup>64</sup> Browning, *Diary*, I, 517. There are various possibilities for interesting studies as to foreign opinion of Lincoln. In 1922 Ruth Williams (Spilver) completed at the University of Illinois a valuable dissertation entitled "English Opinion of Abraham Lincoln". Lynn M. Case of the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas, has demonstrated that such a remote source as the reports of the *procureurs-généraux*, long buried in the French archives, may be made to yield interesting bits for the Lincoln story. These reports are now being prepared for publication in the Beveridge Memorial Fund series by Mr. Case. From among advance samples of this material which the writer has seen one item may be taken. Under date of Jan. 24, 1863, one of these reports refers to the Emancipation Proclamation as "vraiment monstrueuse" and adds the following significant generalization concerning French journalistic opinion on the American question: "Seul le *Courrier du Bas-Rhin* conserve ses préférences aux Républicains du Nord." For a general treatment of opinion in France, see W. Reed West, *Contemporary French Opinion on the American Civil War*, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Hist. and Pol. Sci., Ser. XLII, no. 1 (Baltimore, 1924), especially pp. 85-86.

<sup>65</sup> J. G. Randall, *Constitutional Problems under Lincoln* (New York, 1926), pp. 279-280, 460; Edward McPherson, *Political History of the . . . Rebellion* (Washington, 1882), p. 579.



not a monograph on the relation of Lincoln's Cabinet to Congress (especially the Cabinet crisis of December, 1862) be in order?

What of the common assumption concerning the election of 1864, that McClellan's success would have meant giving up the Union, an assumption contrary to the statements and record of McClellan himself, as well as of the leaders of the Democratic party in that campaign?<sup>66</sup> The stereotyped picture is that Lincoln and McClellan were opposites, that McClellan worked to defeat Lincoln's main objectives, and that Democratic success would have meant Union failure. This arises largely from the false emphasis upon the "peace plank" of the Democrats at Chicago and from a failure to recognize two important facts: (1) that not even the Vallandigham Democrats favored giving up the Union; and (2) that success on the part of the Democrats under the McClellan banner would have been entirely inconsistent with Union surrender. The truth is that Lincoln and McClellan were not opposites on the fundamental issues of '64. They agreed as to prosecuting the war for the Union; they agreed as to Reconstruction. Yet the thing that happened after the war was the negation of that for which both Lincoln and his Democratic opponents stood. It was as if the anti-Lincoln Frémont group, whose ticket did not survive till election day, had won the contest. Their radical ideology was that which prevailed in the postwar result. What the election with its aftermath seems definitely to illustrate is the difficulty of saying that governmental policy is determined by presidential votes.

At many points in the larger Lincoln story the historian must turn revisionist. No longer can he explain the antislavery crusade in terms of a New England focus or a Garrisonian leadership. Taking account of the recent study by Barnes and of the Weld-Grimké letters,<sup>67</sup> he must lay increased emphasis on C. G. Finney, Theodore Dwight Weld, the organizing labors and financial contributions of the Tappans, and the

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Charles R. Wilson, "McClellan's Changing Views on the Peace Plank of 1864", *Am. Hist. Rev.*, XXXVIII, 498-505. In this article Dr. Wilson shows how McClellan's wording of his views as to peace, and especially as to a possible armistice with "our present adversaries", underwent modification as his letter of acceptance was worked up through a series of preliminary drafts. From this study it becomes evident that, whatever may have been his hesitation in the actual phrasing of his letter on the difficult question of a conditional or unconditional armistice, McClellan came through with a decisive statement insisting upon the Union as an indispensable condition in peace negotiations.

<sup>67</sup> Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York, 1933). This volume was reviewed by the author in the *Journal of Southern History*, I (Feb., 1935), 96-98. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, eds., *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld, and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844* (Beveridge Memorial Fund, Am. Hist. Assoc., 1934).

protesting voices of the "Lane rebels". Doings on the Western anti-slavery front must be considerably stressed. As for Garrison, the newer studies make it appear that he was not so much the founder and leader of the American antislavery movement as a bold free-lance agitator and journalist who was not even the recognized spokesman of New England abolitionists and whose notorious name, overemphasized in the South, brought odium rather than strength to a movement shaped by other hands.

Much is needed for the future of Lincoln scholarship. A thorough, evaluated, but not overloaded, bibliography of Lincoln would be desirable. An index-digest of known Lincoln material would be of value. The presidency has received inadequate treatment.<sup>68</sup> In many biographical accounts Lincoln's greatness as President is assumed and passed over by easy generalization or emotional anecdote; seldom is the presidency subjected to discriminating analysis by general biographers. In the manifold public problems and personal relationships of the Lincoln administration lie significant possibilities for investigation. Lincoln's political apprenticeship may be illuminated by a detailed study of the Illinois legislature in the 1830's, the internal improvement period when the state was about to burgeon into a great industrial commonwealth. Beveridge did more than previous biographers in this field; but he did not use all the archival sources, and further work is needed. The part taken by Lincoln the Whig in the shaping of important laws in a Democratic legislature (a subject partly obscured by the fact that Lincoln sometimes drafted bills which others introduced) has not been fully understood.<sup>69</sup>

Part of the advance in Lincoln scholarship will be by collateral attack. Much has been done in George Fort Milton's new work on Douglas.<sup>70</sup> A complete study of Lincoln's abolitionist partner, W. H. Herndon, ought to have both bibliographical and biographical value in view of Herndon's double character as partner and biographer.<sup>71</sup> It would be of

<sup>68</sup> The inadequacy of the posthumously published study by William E. Barton (*President Lincoln*, 2 vols. [paged continuously], Indianapolis, 1933) will be realized if one takes the chapter on emancipation (pp. 435-461) and notes how largely it consists of a mere reprint of well-known statements by Lincoln, Chase, and Welles, and how little it offers any real interpretation of Lincoln's wartime policy concerning slavery. A further example of Barton's method is found on pp. 70-71, where he gives a childish account of Lincoln's alleged visit to a New York Sunday School.

<sup>69</sup> On this subject the writer is indebted to Miss Margaret Cross Norton of the State Archives Division at Springfield, Illinois.

<sup>70</sup> *The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War* (Boston, 1934).

<sup>71</sup> For an excellent brief study of Herndon, see Editor's Preface of *Herndon's Life of Lincoln*, Angle edition.

interest to know all that is knowable about Lincoln's country cousin and boyhood companion, Dennis Hanks, whose visit to Washington during the war in his new suit of clothes looms large in Herndon. In cases where men of the period have not been treated in adequate biographies, Lincoln scholars may expect further light when such works appear. The case of Governor Richard Yates of Illinois is especially alluring because a voluminous mass of Yates papers, preserved in the family, has thus far been withheld from historical use, while in the archives at Springfield the governor's letter books and incoming correspondence for the Yates administration are missing. The significance for the Lincoln theme of a careful study of one of the war governors is well illustrated in H. G. Pearson's study of John A. Andrew. A new biography of Stanton is needed and the same may be said of Chase. The Chase diaries are not even available in any complete printed edition. The definitive biography of Horace Greeley is yet to be written. It is only recently that John Sherman<sup>72</sup> and George F. Edmunds<sup>73</sup> have found adequate biographical treatment, but at present writing both of these studies are unpublished. There are scores of minor Civil War characters (among whom might be mentioned George Ashmun, Leonard Swett, John P. Hale, Cassius M. Clay, N. B. Judd, E. D. Morgan, John Covode, Jacob Collamer, Edgar Cowan, John J. Crittenden, and Amos Kendall) the further study of whom should add to the Lincoln story. Smith's study of the Blairs contributed to our understanding of Lincoln situations.<sup>74</sup> Allan Nevins's biography of Hewitt contains new contributions on Lincoln, especially concerning a wartime interview between Hewitt and the President, about which a well-known publisher had woven a picturesque but erroneous narrative. The subject of Lee might seem remote from Lincoln; but Douglas Southall Freeman's superb new biography gives an excellent critique of the sources concerning the offer to Lee of high Union command in 1861.<sup>75</sup> One does not usually search in Southern collections for Lincoln material; but it is certainly to be found, as was illustrated in Dumond's Southern editorials on secession, a volume which revealed that Southern opinion in the crisis before

<sup>72</sup> The first adequate biography of Sherman, by Jeannette Paddock Nichols and Roy F. Nichols, is now in preparation. It is announced as a future volume in the series of American Political Leaders (Dodd, Mead and Co.), edited by Allan Nevins.

<sup>73</sup> Selig Adler, "The Senatorial Career of George Franklin Edmunds, 1866-1891", University of Illinois doctoral dissertation, 1934.

<sup>74</sup> William Ernest Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics* (2 vols., New York, 1933).

<sup>75</sup> *Abram S. Hewitt, with Some Account of Peter Cooper* (New York, 1935), especially pp. 204 ff. *R. E. Lee: a Biography* (New York, 1934-1935), I, 633 ff.



Lincoln's inauguration was not all of a piece, but was a matter of varying shades and colors.<sup>76</sup>

Students who wish to recapture the flavor of the Lincoln era must also take account of such a matter as wartime propaganda. Though the assaults upon public opinion were not so deliberate or extensive as in later years, the phenomena of propaganda were by no means absent. There were Union League clubs, publication societies, mass meetings, floods of circulars, handbills, broadsides, and various other methods of beating the tom-tom for the Union cause. Facts were twisted in true propagandist fashion; documents were forged; rumors were circulated; whispering campaigns were developed. The war of pamphlets was keen; atrocity stories were sedulously spread;<sup>77</sup> efforts were made to win over important newspapers. Drives for recruits and appeals for the purchase of government bonds kept up a constant attack upon public opinion. The activity of orators of all kinds, from the polished Everett to the blatant Parson Brownlow, was maintained at full blast. The United States Sanitary Commission, a welfare organization analogous to the Red Cross, had its propagandist aspect. Perhaps the worst propaganda was that of the poets whose voluminous effusions are read today with mingled amusement and nausea.<sup>78</sup> In the campaign for foreign support the efforts of both the Union and Confederate governments bore in a more precise sense the character of recognizable propaganda. The Confederacy printed a foreign newspaper, the *Index*, while the Union government used special emissaries besides its regularly credited diplomatic agents. Thurlow Weed went abroad to influence public men in England and France. Bishop McIlwaine of the Episcopal Church labored among English church groups. Archbishop Hughes, with instructions from Seward, promoted the cause among Catholic groups in Ireland, France, and Italy. The visit of Robert J. Walker to England in 1863 as the financial agent of the United States government had aspects that resemble modern propaganda methods; while the "roving diplomat", the "poaching diplomat", and the "volunteer diplomat" played their parts on many a foreign stage.<sup>79</sup> There was emigration propaganda;

<sup>76</sup> Dwight Lowell Dumond, ed., *Southern Editorials on Secession* (Beveridge Memorial Fund, Am. Hist. Assoc., 1931).

<sup>77</sup> William B. Hesseltine, "The Propaganda Literature of Confederate Prisons", *Jour. of Southern Hist.*, I (Feb., 1935), 56-66.

<sup>78</sup> A contemporary collection of wartime poetry is found in the *Rebellion Record*, Frank Moore, ed. (12 vols., New York, 1861-1868).

<sup>79</sup> In describing American spokesmen abroad Charles Francis Adams, son of the minister to England, writes: "These emissaries were of four . . . types: (1) the roving diplomat, irregularly accredited by the State Department; (2) the poaching diplomat,



there was famine relief not entirely innocent of preaching; and there were foreign princes serving with the Union army. The Forbes-Aspinwall mission did its bit to mold opinion abroad; and the same may be said of Motley's articles, Henry Ward Beecher's tour, Harriet Beecher Stowe's letter to Lord Shaftesbury, and Cyrus W. Field's numerous crossings.

Lincoln's own publicity methods and those of his Cabinet are of decided interest. One should not overlook his adroit use of formal messages and proclamations, his personality itself as an asset to the cause, his open letters wherein appear some of his finest phrases, and his cultivated contacts with editors and publicists. One finds Seward's efforts to control opinion in his dispatches and personal letters, Stanton's in his sanguine reports, Chase's in the utterings of his *Man Friday* (Jay Cooke). Surely there is more to be done via the propaganda story in showing the relation of the Lincoln administration to this or that "public" at home and abroad.

Finally there will be the task of interpretation, though it is beyond the scope of this paper to forecast what that will involve. The historian must hew to the line in treating Lincoln material. Not only must he be free from party and sectional bias; he must be innocent of the hero tradition. If Lincoln emerges as hero, well and good; but Lincoln should not be exempt from critical historical treatment, and hero-worship should not be the path of approach. Let all the truth be told, including the squabbles of the war, the muddling, the political interference with military operations, the inconsistencies, the hesitancies, the frustrations of the Lincoln administration. Respect must be paid to adverse deductions that come as a matter of sound conclusion after a thorough study of evidence. Conversely, favorable conclusions are of value only as they arrive by the same critical process. Interpretation, if it is to be historical, must be tied down to foundations. The interpreter must know the sources more than superficially if he would tell a straight story, must be widely read if he would supply setting and background, must know Lincoln's mind and the minds about him if he would avoid misrepresentation of meanings. To interpret will be to avoid that type of writing which takes a bit of evidence away from its setting and presents it as conclusive or as representative of the whole picture. The interpretive biographer must consider to what extent popular acclaim of Lincoln

accredited to one government, but seeking a wider field of activity . . . (3) the volunteer diplomat, not accredited at all . . . and (4) the special agent, sent out by some department . . . [for] a particular object." Charles Francis Adams, *Charles Francis Adams* (Boston, 1900), pp. 353-354.

takes account of the content and significance of Lincoln principles and thought. He must strip the subject of spurious elements, misconceptions, and prejudices, must assess the influences that surrounded Lincoln, portray his opponents fairly, state his mistakes frankly, and distinguish in sundry political controversies between real thinking and rationalization of existing motives.

There are certain questions that will serve the critic by way of diagnosis as to the biographer's fairness. It will require real detachment and impartiality to set forth the mediocrity of some of Lincoln's Whig campaign speeches. The biographer's integrity will be tested when he comes to treat conciliatory efforts to avoid the Civil War, for he will be tempted to assume that the war was "inevitable", that the Union could not have been saved without a struggle, that everything Buchanan did was wrong, and that Lincoln's Sumter policy and his call for troops, though playing into the secessionist's hand, alienating the upper South, and running counter to the advice of his own Cabinet, were wisdom itself. There is a sad paradox here, for if Lincoln had succeeded in averting the Civil War without loss of principle, that superb achievement would probably have made both him and his party less famous. Other tests of the biographer's honesty will come in connection with the treatment of McClellan (a theme for honest criticism of the Lincoln administration),<sup>80</sup> and the discussion of the Emancipation Proclamation so as to show that it was neither an application of Garrison's immediatism, nor the embodiment of Lincoln's main policy as to slavery, nor a solution of the problem of the Negro.

Some interpretation will come by way of comparison. Lincoln as President may be better understood by comparing his problems with those of Wilson. The fact that the popular concept of Lincoln has been drawn by his friends, while that of Wilson has been drawn chiefly by his critics, should not be overlooked.<sup>81</sup> Or again, the comparison of Lincoln's modest autobiographical bits<sup>82</sup> with the autobiography and self-interpretation of Theodore Roosevelt is both diverting and illuminating. The interpreter of Lincoln must consider not only qualities, but degrees of qualities—not only whether Lincoln was an opportunist, but whether his opportunism exceeded what would seem necessary to every practical leader in an imperfect world, and whether it involved a sur-

<sup>80</sup> For new light on McClellan, see William Starr Myers, *General George Brinton McClellan* (New York, 1934).

<sup>81</sup> J. G. Randall, "Lincoln's Task and Wilson's", *South Atlantic Quar.*, XXIX (Oct., 1930), 349-368.

<sup>82</sup> Nicolay and Hay, *Works*, I, 596-597, 638-644.

render of ideals. To interpret will be to avoid merely looking for the familiar. It will mean seeing things anew, judging not by what secondary writers have said, but by a fresh viewing of sources. Some of the reinterpretation must come from Southern scholars. The present vogue of social history, as well as other advances of the frontier of historical understanding, opens new possibilities for Lincoln scholarship. If every man is "his own historian", then every historian can contribute something new, provided he does not make the uniqueness of a preconceived point of view an end in itself. Self-sufficiency will betray the historian: he will need to welcome the contributions of economists, law scholars, military specialists, psychologists (within reason), and other allies.

When the various things imperfectly suggested in these pages have been done, and more besides, the time will arrive for that complete biography of Lincoln which is still awaited. At present writing there is no biography which is at once recent, up-to-date in its use of sources and monographs, and full-length in its scope. Some of the minor biographies do little more than repeat Herndon or, more recently, Beveridge. Each decade has seen significant advances in Lincoln scholarship. The decade of the nineteen-thirties is no exception; and as for the forties it is then that the Lincoln papers will be opened, after which a new set of the *Works* will be needed. Considering the sustained interest in Lincoln, it is not likely that popular writing in the field will suddenly stop. What further products the historical guild will produce and what advances in Lincoln scholarship will appear fifty years hence when the American Historical Association reaches its centennial year, can only be imagined.

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